Kerala Houseboats Elements in a mural etched by maker by Rama Shankar Diwakar

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Kerala is akin to a mural etched by maker himself. It has a wide gradation of hues, shades and texture. This visual treat par excellence attracts millions of tourists to its fold.

Kerala is situated in the Malabar Coast of south western India. This coastal territory rolls in green vegetation from Western Ghats to Arabian Sea.

Pristine beaches, mist shrouded hill stations, winding backwaters, exotic wildlife, verdant landscape and suave art forms are prominent attractions of Kerala. Out of these, backwater is that which makes Kerala unique. Backwater is a phenomenon seen only in Kerala. Canals and inlets which are manmade and of natural origin and branches of over forty rivers combine with five lakes to form a complex network which is known as backwater. Backwaters were used as transportation means by local people before bridges, ferries and roads came. They also depended on backwaters for means of livelihood such as fishing and agriculture. Backwaters continue to contribute to Kerala economy via tourism. Houseboats Kerala makes for beautiful setting. Shores are adorned by monuments, coconut trees swaying their heads, lush green vegetation and paddy fields, fishing nets and various acts of human drama. Backwaters are embellished with water flowers especially water lilies. Cruises savoring this landscape are memorable affairs.

Houseboats are now the most popular medium to have this cruise. Kerala Houseboats are modeled on â€œKettuvallamsâ€• of yesteryears. Kettuvallams were used to transport rice and other household item through backwaters. They came with thatched roofs over wooden hulls to offer protection from elements of nature. Although the form still remains unaltered, Houseboats are two to three storied affairs with one to five bedrooms included. Apart from bedrooms, there are dining hall and a sit out open on all sides. From this sit out the exquisite charm of backwaters can be savored. Houseboats come adjoined with generators providing for air conditioning. There are western style toilets also attached. A crew including a cook accompanies the guests. The menu is usually indigenous variety with local fish included. But at the end of the day the whims of tourists prevails. Although Houseboats are motorized, they are run in a sluggish pace letting the guests relish the setting to the fullest.

Spending a night in Houseboat docked in backwaters is blissful affair. You have the choice of asking to switch off electric lamps and spending time in lights of lanterns alone to get a local feel. From afar, you can witness abodes and boats as static and mobile spots of illumination respectively. If the goddess of good fortune is kind to you, you may also glimpse fireflies adorning the tree branches, blinking eternally.

Houseboats are made of wood of Anjili (Wild Jack). The things that go into making the accessories are local and eco friendly. It is to be noted that no nails are used. Coir is utilized instead by tying. The average length of Houseboats is ninety five to one hundred and fifteen feet and width thirteen to fifteen feet.

Alleppey, Kochi, Kollam and Kumarakom are the important places where backwater tourism thrives. Kumarakom is a tiny village near Kottayam. It is blessed with all the bounties of a backwater village. Allured by its charm millions visit Kumarakom. Kumarakom also has a bird sanctuary which is frequented by migratory birds including Siberian crane.

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